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THE GAME OF LIBRARY **TETRIS**:

USING A SHELF-BASED ADDRESS SYSTEM

An empty space!



Books needing space!



“Tetris” the books!



What is a shelf-based address system?

- An alternative shelving system in which you give items a physical address based on where they are located on the shelves.



When and where might you use an address system?

- Non-public spaces where materials may be stored permanently, particularly areas where materials need to move in quickly and/or sporadically.
- Areas where shifting to keep in call number order is difficult or too time consuming.
- Places where you may need to locate continuing series but can't predict how much space they will need in the future (changing volume size and number of issues).

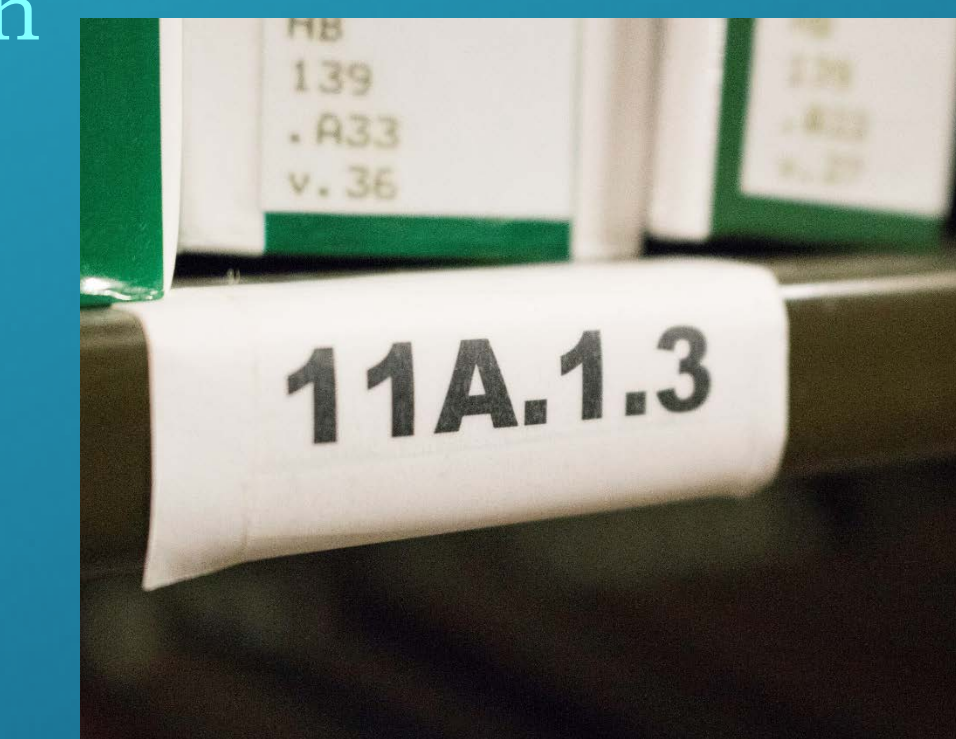
Why would you consider using one?

- No more shifting! Items do not have to remain in call number order because they are found based on shelf they live on. You can shelve materials in any available space.
- Re-shelving of materials takes minimal training. This is a great way to use volunteers who might not have as much familiarity with library shelving systems.
- Flexibility to keep materials together that might necessarily be classified together. Such as a collection of special project books or a number of titles from a certain fund.



Setting up a shelf-based system:

- Label ranges with number and side A/B
- Label shelves by bay/SFU number and by shelf number.
- Label monographs with shelf address in advance or when requested.



- Assign all serial volumes the address of the first volume for the whole series; this allows quick find & replace to allow easier re-addressing if relocating later
- Enter the address for each item into the corresponding item record as a “public note” (or whatever makes sense for your library software and catalog)

Learn from our mistakes! Here's how to prevent problems:

- Invest the time up front to label accurately both on the physical item and in the catalog. Trying to find items without an address can be like looking for a needle in a haystack without documentation about where it's been.
- If moving items, enter the new address in the item records and correct address labels on physical volumes immediately.
- Avoid the “leading zero” problem when asking library software or Excel to put in order. Add zero's before single digits for ranges, SFUs, shelves.

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- Consider adding “series start” to serials volumes with addresses that match the first volume rather than the shelf they actually sit on to avoid confusion when re-shelving.

